

# **Montgomery County Energy and Air Quality Advisory Committee**

## **Annual Report to the County Executive**

**January 11, 2001**

### **Air Quality:**

- The County's Air Quality Code, Chapter 3, has not been revised in 26 years, although significant technical and regulatory changes have occurred. During the past year, revisions to the Code have been initiated. EAQAC supported, and participated in, these revisions. EAQAC recommends that this legislation move forward for approval and implementation. EAQAC strongly endorses the addition of the Indoor Air Quality component, and believes that the revisions strike a needed balance regarding Indoor Air Quality. This code section proposes to regulate multi-tenant residences and commercial businesses in instances where their processes or actions cause indoor air pollutants in adjacent properties or leaseholds. For example, the proposed revision would cover an auto shop that is not properly ventilating, and which is therefore causing exhaust fumes to enter a neighboring business. Chapter 3 revisions are not aimed at duplicating existing legislation or protecting workers in the workplace. EAQAC will continue to support this proposed legislation and will provide testimony at public hearings.
- EAQAC strongly supports an initiative put forward by the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) to improve mechanical review and inspection of HVAC (Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning) systems and energy performance of buildings, and to permit mechanical system installation. This initiative will ensure that buildings are compliant with Montgomery County Building and Energy Codes. Such action will sustain the goals of Chapter 3, and will eliminate the potential for many indoor air quality problems by capturing them during the design phase.
- Indoor Air quality problems in Montgomery County public schools continue to be of concern. EAQAC feels that some additional oversight of school design, construction, and facilities management is needed. EAQAC would like to see the provisions of Chapter 3 and the Division of Facilities Services' "Energy Design Guidelines" applied to Montgomery County Public Schools.

### **Energy:**

- Maryland's electricity deregulation took effect on July 1, 2000. New electricity suppliers have been slow to enter the competitive market because high fuel prices make it difficult for new entrants to beat the incumbent utilities' rates for Standard Offer Service. EAQAC will continue to monitor the situation and offer suggestions as appropriate.

- The County successfully completed a competitive procurement of electricity during the past year. EAQAC provided input to the County Council via a letter of support in December 1999. That letter recommended that the electricity purchase include a requirement for a percentage of "clean" or "green" power. We are pleased that the County's contract with Washington Gas Energy Services (WGES), the successful bidder, includes the stipulation that WGES will provide 3% of its power from clean or renewable energy sources. EAQAC plans to continue to support the County's purchases of environmentally friendly power and other environmentally preferable products.
- EAQAC supported the County in joining the Cities for Climate Protection campaign and will play a supportive role in the development of the County's action plan, for which data collection has begun.

### **Science Fair Awards 2000:**

- Each year, EAQAC sponsors awards for energy and air quality related projects in the Montgomery County Science Fair. Mary Ashe and Clara Minieri were selected as Year 2000 Science Fair winners.
- In support of EAQAC's program, the Rotary Club of Rockville presented a \$50 bonds to both winners. These savings bonds are part of the Rotary Club's Preserve Planet Earth program, which was launched in 1990 to promote greater awareness worldwide of critical environmental issues affecting their communities and the planet.

### **Transportation:**

- EAQAC will continue to support the purchase of alternative fuel vehicles such as the recent 19 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Ride-On buses purchased by the County, and the proposed 100 CNG buses by Metro.
- EAQAC proposes to develop a relationship with County fleet operators to ascertain what additional support or guidance would be useful to encourage the increased use of high efficiency, low emission transportation modes.